

# KING ARGIMÉNÈS AND THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR



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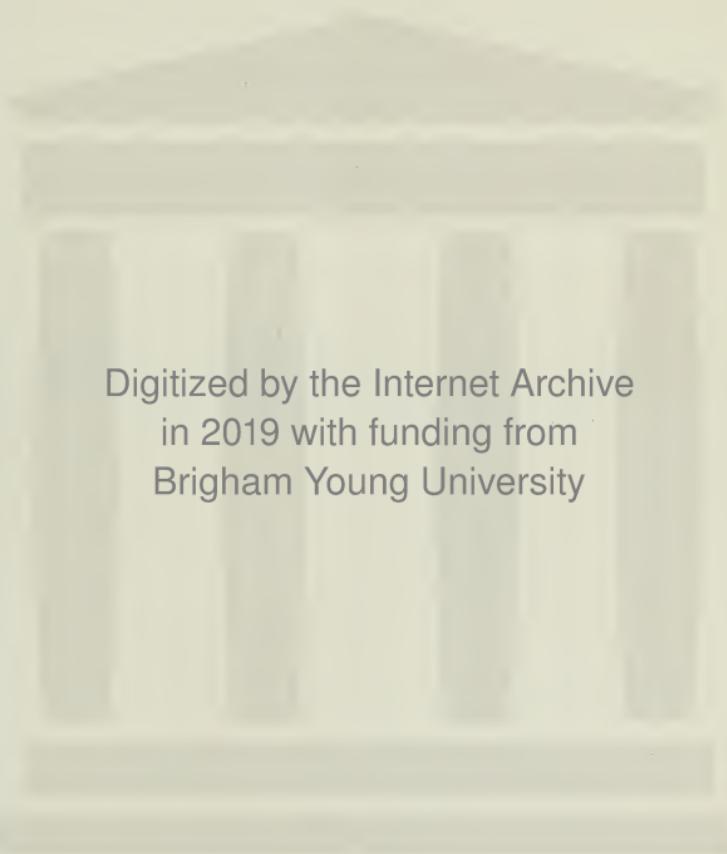
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KING ARGIMĒNĒS AND THE  
UNKNOWN WARRIOR

## CHARACTERS

KING ARGIMĒNĒS .	.	}	<i>Slaves of King Darniak</i>
ZARB ( <i>a slave, born of slaves</i> ) .			
AN OLD SLAVE .			
A YOUNG SLAVE .			
A PROPHET			
THE KING'S OVERSEER			
KING DARNIAK			
QUEEN ATHARLIA			
QUEEN OXARA			
QUEEN CAHAFRA			
QUEEN THRAGOLIND			
THE IDOL-GUARD			
THE SERVANT OF THE KING'S DOG			
<i>Slaves and Attendants</i>			

TIME. *A long time ago.*

# King Argimēnēs and the Unknown Warrior

*By*  
Lord Dunsany

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# KING ARGIMĒNĒS AND THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR

## ACT I

SCENE : *The dinner-hour on the slave-fields of KING DARNIAK. The curtain rises upon KING ARGIMĒNĒS, sitting upon the ground, bowed, ragged and dirty, gnawing a bone. He has uncouth hair and a dishevelled beard. A battered spade lies near him. Two or three slaves sit at back of stage eating raw cabbage leaves. The tear-song, the chant of the low-born, rises at intervals, monotonous and mournful, coming from distant slave-fields.*

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. This is a good bone ; there is juice in this bōne.

ZARB. I wish I were you, Argimēnēs.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. I am not to be envied any longer. I have eaten up my bone.

ZARB. I wish I were you because you have been a king. Because men have prostrated themselves before your feet. Because you have ridden a horse and worn a crown and have been called Majesty.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. When I remember that I have been a king it is very terrible.

ZARB. But you are lucky to have such things in your memory as you have. I have nothing in my memory. Once I went for a year without being flogged, and I remember my cleverness in contriving it. I have nothing else to remember.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. It is very terrible to have been a king.

ZARB. But we have nothing who have no good memories in the past. It is not easy for us to hope for the future here.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. Have you any god ?

ZARB. We may not have a god because he might make us brave and we might kill our guards. He might make a miracle and give us swords.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. Ah, you have no hope then.

ZARB. I have a little hope. Hush, and I will tell you a secret. The king's great dog is ill and like to die. They will throw him to us. We shall have beautiful bones then.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. Ah ! Bones.

ZARB. Yes. That is what *I* hope for. And have *you* no other hope ? Do you not hope that your nation will arise some day and rescue you and cast off the king and hang him up by his thumbs from the palace gateway ?

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. No. I have no other hope, for my god was cast down in the temple and broken into three pieces on the day that they surprised us and took me sleeping. But will they throw him to us ? Will so honourable a brute as the king's dog be thrown to us ?

ZARB. When he is dead his honours are taken away. Even the king when he is dead is given to the worms. Then why should not his dog be thrown to us ?

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. We are not worms !

ZARB. You do not understand, Argiménés. The worms are little and free, while we are big and enslaved. I did not say we were worms, but we are *like* worms,

and if they have the king when he is dead, why then—

KING ARGIMENES. Tell me more of the king's dog. Are there big bones on him?

ZARB. Ay, he is a big dog—a high, big, black one.

KING ARGIMENES. You know him then?

ZARB. Oh yes, I know him. I know him well. I was beaten once because of him, twenty-five strokes from the treble whips, two men beating me.

KING ARGIMENES. How did they beat you because of the king's dog?

ZARB. They beat me because I spoke to him without making obeisance. He was coming dancing alone over the slave-fields and I spoke to him. He was a friendly great dog, and I spoke to him and patted his head, and did not make obeisance.

KING ARGIMENES. And they saw you do it?

ZARB. Yes, the slave guard saw me. They came and seized me at once and bound my arms. The great dog wanted me to speak to him again, but I was hurried away.

KING ARGIMENES. You should have made obeisance.

ZARB. The great dog seemed so friendly that I forgot he was the king's great dog.

KING ARGIMENES. But tell me more. Was he hurt or is it a sickness?

ZARB. They say that it is a sickness.

KING ARGIMENES. Ah. Then he will grow thin if he does not die soon. If it had been a hurt!—but we should not complain. I complain more often than you

do because I had not learned to submit while I was yet young.

ZARB. If your beautiful memories do not please you, you should hope more. I wish I had your memories. I should not trouble to hope then. It is very hard to hope.

KING ARGIMENES. There will be nothing more to hope for when we have eaten the king's dog.

ZARB. Why, you might find gold in the earth while you were digging. Then you might bribe the commander of the guard to lend you his sword ; we would all follow you if you had a sword. Then we might take the king and bind him and lay him on the ground and fasten his tongue outside his mouth with thorns and put honey on it and sprinkle honey near. Then the grey ants would come from one of their big mounds. My father found gold once when he was digging.

KING ARGIMENES (*pointedly*) Did your father free himself ?

ZARB. No. Because the king's overseer found him looking at the gold and killed him. But he would have freed himself if he could have bribed the guard.  
*(A prophet walks across the stage attended by two guards)*

SLAVES. He is going to the king. He is going to the king.

ZARB. He is going to the king.

KING ARGIMENES. Going to prophesy good things to the king. It is easy to prophesy good things to a king, and be rewarded when the good things come. What else should come to a king ? A prophet ! a prophet !

(A deep bell tolls slowly. KING ARGIMĒNĒS and ZARB pick up their spades at once, and the old slaves at the back of the stage go down on their knees immediately and grub in the soil with their hands. The white beard of the oldest trails in the dirt as he works. KING ARGIMĒNĒS digs)

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. What is the name of that song that we always sing ? I like the song.

ZARB. It has no name. It is our song. There is no other song.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. Once there were other songs. Has this no name ?

ZARB. I think the soldiers have a name for it.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. What do the soldiers call it ?

ZARB. The soldiers call it the tear-song, the chant of the low-born.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. It is a good song. I could sing no other now. (ZARB moves away, digging)

KING ARGIMĒNĒS (*to himself as his spade touches something in the earth*) Metal ! (*Feels with his spade again*) Gold perhaps ! It is of no use here. (*Uncovers earth leisurely. Suddenly he drops on his knees and works excitedly in the earth with his hands. Then very slowly, still kneeling, he lifts, lying flat on his hands, a long greenish sword, his eyes intent on it. About the level of his uplifted forehead he holds it, still flat on both hands, and addresses it thus : )* O holy and blessed thing. (*Then he lowers it slowly till his hands rest on his knees, and looking all the while at the sword, log.*) Three years ago to-morrow King Darniak spat at me, having taken

my kingdom from me. Three times in that year I was flogged, with twelve stripes, with seventeen stripes, and with twenty stripes. A year and eleven months ago, come Moon Day, the king's overseer struck me in the face, and nine times in that year he called me dog. For one month two weeks and a day I was yoked with a bullock and pulled a rounded stone all day over the paths, except while we were fed. I was flogged twice that year—with eighteen stripes and with ten stripes. This year the roof of the slave sty has fallen in and King Darniak will not repair it. Five weeks ago one of his queens laughed at me as she came across the slave-fields. I was flogged again this year and with thirteen stripes, and twelve times they have called me dog. And these things they have done to a king, and a king of the House of Ithara.

(*He listens attentively for a moment, then buries the sword again and pats the earth over it with his hands, then digs again. The old slaves do not see him; their faces are to the earth. Enter THE KING'S OVERSEER carrying a whip. The slaves and KING ARGIMENES kneel with their foreheads to the ground as he passes across the stage. Exit THE KING'S OVERSEER*)

KING ARGIMENES (*kneeling, hands outspread downwards*) O warrior spirit, wherever thou wanderest, whoever be thy gods, whether they punish thee or whether they bless thee, O kingly spirit, that once laid here this sword, behold, I pray to thee, having no gods to pray to, for the god of my nation was broken

in three by night. Mine arm is stiff with three years' slavery, and remembers not the sword. But guide thy sword till I have slain six men and armed the strongest slaves, and thou shalt have the sacrifice every year of a hundred goodly oxen. And I will build in Ithara a temple to thy memory wherein all that enter in shall remember thee ; so shalt thou be honoured and envied among the dead, for the dead are very jealous of remembrance. Aye, though thou wert a robber that took men's lives unrighteously, yet shall rare spices smoulder in thy temple and little maidens sing and new-plucked flowers deck the solemn aisles ; and priests shall go about it ringing bells that thy soul shall find repose. O but it has a good blade this old green sword ; thou wouldest not like to see it miss its mark, if the dead see at all as wise men teach, thou wouldest not like to see it go thirsting into the air ; so huge a sword should find its marrowy bone. (*Extending his right hand upward*) Come into my right arm, O ancient spirit, O unknown warrior's soul. And, if thou hast the ear of any gods, speak there against Illuriel, god of King Darniak.

(*He rises and goes on digging. Re-enter THE KING'S OVERSEER, loq.*)

THE KING'S OVERSEER. So you have been praying.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS (*kneeling*) No, master.

THE KING'S OVERSEER. The slave-guard saw you.  
(*Strikes him*) It is not lawful for a slave to pray.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. I did but pray to Illuriel to make me a good slave, to teach me to dig well and to pull the rounded stone and to make me not to die when the

food is scarce, but to be a good slave to my master the great king.

THE KING'S OVERSEER. Who art thou to pray to Illuriel ? Dogs may not pray to an immortal god.

(*Exit. ZARB comes back, digging*)

KING ARGIMÉNÈS (*digging*) Zarb.

ZARB (*also digging*) Do not look at me when you speak. The guards are watching us. Look at your digging.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. How do the guards know we are speaking because we look at one another ?

ZARB. You are very witless. Of course they know.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. Zarb.

ZARB. What is it ?

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. How many guards are there in sight ?

ZARB. There are six of them over there. They are watching us.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. Are there other guards in sight of these six guards ?

ZARB. No.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. How do you know ?

ZARB. Because whenever their officer leaves them they sit upon the ground and play with dice.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. How does that show that there are not another six in sight of them ?

ZARB. How witless you are, Argiménès. Of course it shows there are not. Because, if there were, another officer would see them, and their thumbs would be cut off.

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. Ah. (*A pause*) Zarb (*a pause*)

Would the slaves follow me if I tried to kill the guards ?

ZARB. No, Argimēnēs.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. Why would they not follow me ?

ZARB. Because you look like a slave. They will never follow a slave, because they are slaves themselves, and know how mean a creature is a slave. If you looked like a king they would follow you.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. But I am a king. They know that I am a king.

ZARB. It is better to look like a king. It is looks that they would go by.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. If I had a sword would they follow me ? A beautiful huge sword of bronze.

ZARB. I wish I could think of things like that. It is because you were once a king that you can think of a sword of bronze. I tried to hope once that I should some day fight the guards, but I couldn't picture a sword. I couldn't imagine it ; I could only picture whips.

KING ARGIMĒNĒS. Dig a little nearer, Zarb. (*They both edge closer*) I have found a very old sword in the earth. It is not a sword such as common soldiers wear. A king must have worn it, and an angry king. It must have done fearful things ; there are little dints in it. Perhaps there was a battle here long ago where all were slain, and perhaps that king died last and buried his sword, but the great birds swallowed him.

ZARB. You have been thinking too much of the king's dog, Argimēnēs, and that has made you hungry, and hunger has driven you mad.

---

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. I have found such a sword. (*A pause*)

ZARB. Why—then you will wear a purple cloak again, and sit on a great throne, and ride a prancing horse, and we shall call you Majesty.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. I shall break a long fast first, and drink much water, and sleep. But will the slaves follow me ?

ZARB. You will *make* them follow you if you have a sword. Yet is Illuriel a very potent god ? They say that none have prevailed against King Darniak's dynasty so long as Illuriel stood. Once an enemy cast Illuriel into the river and overthrew his dynasty, but a fisherman found him again and set him up, and the enemy was driven out and the dynasty returned.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. If Illuriel could be cast down as my god was cast down perhaps King Darniak could be overcome as I was overcome in my sleep ?

ZARB. If Illuriel were cast down all the people would utter a cry and flee away. It would be a fearful portent.

KING ARGIMÉNÉS. How many men are there in the armoury at the palace ?

ZARB. There are ten men in the palace armoury when all the slave-guards are out.

(*They dig awhile in silence*)

ZARB. The officer of the slave-guard has gone away. They are playing with dice now. (ZARB throws down his spade and stretches his arms) The man with the big beard has won again, he is very nimble with his

thumbs. They are playing again, but it is getting dark, I cannot clearly see.

(KING ARGIMĒNĒS *furtively uncovers the sword, he picks it up and grips it in his hand*)

ZARB. Majesty !

(KING ARGIMĒNĒS *crouches and steals away towards the slave-guard*)

ZARB (*to the other slaves*) Argimēnēs has found a terrible sword and has gone to slay the slave-guard. It is not a common sword, it is some king's sword.

AN OLD SLAVE. Argimēnēs will be dreadfully flogged. We shall hear him cry all night. His cries will frighten us, and we shall not sleep.

ZARB. No ! no ! The guards flog poor slaves, but Argimēnēs had an angry look. The guards will be afraid when they see him look so angry and see his terrible sword. It was a huge sword, and he looked very angry. He will bring us the swords of the slave-guard. We must prostrate ourselves before him and kiss his feet or he will be angry with us too.

OLD SLAVE. Will Argimēnēs give me a sword ?

ZARB. He will have swords for six of us if he slays the slave-guard. Yes, he will give you a sword.

SLAVE. A sword ! No, no, I must not ; the king would kill me if he found that I had a sword.

SECOND SLAVE (*slowly, as one who develops an idea*) If the king found that I had a sword, why then it would be an evil day for the king.

(*They all look off left*)

ZARB. I think they are playing at dice again.

FIRST SLAVE. I do not see Argiménès.

ZARB. No, because he was crouching as he walked.  
The slave-guard is on the sky-line.

SECOND SLAVE. What is that dark shadow behind the  
slave-guard ?

ZARB. It is too still to be Argiménès.

SECOND SLAVE. Look ! it moves.

ZARB. The evening is too dark, I cannot see.

(They continue to gaze into the gathering darkness.

*They raise themselves on their knees and crane their  
necks. Nobody speaks. Then from their lips and  
from others farther off goes up a long deep "Oh !"  
It is like the sound that goes up from the grand  
stand when a horse falls at a fence, or in England  
like the first exclamation of the crowd at a great  
cricket match when a man is caught in the slips)*

[Curtain

## ACT II

SCENE : *The Throne Hall of KING DARNIAK.* KING DARNIAK is seated on his throne ; a little to his left is a dark-green seated idol. His queens are seated about him on the ground, two on his right and two between him and the idol. All wear crowns. Beside the dark-green idol a soldier with a pike is kneeling upon one knee. The tear-song, the chant of the low-born, drifts faintly up from the slave-fields.

FIRST QUEEN. Do show us the new prophet, Majesty ; it would be very interesting to see another prophet.

THE KING. Ah, yes. (*He strikes upon a gong, and an ATTENDANT enters, walks straight past THE KING and bows before the idol ; he then walks back to the centre of the stage and bows before THE KING*)

THE KING. Bring the new prophet hither. (*Exit ATTENDANT. Enter THE KING'S OVERSEER holding a roll of paper, he passes THE KING, bows to the idol, returns to the front of THE KING, kneels and remains kneeling with bended head. Meanwhile THE KING speaks to the SECOND QUEEN on his immediate right*) We are making a beautiful arbour for you, O Atharlia, at an end of the great garden. There shall be iris-flowers that you love and all things that grow by streams. And the stream there shall be small and winding like one of those in your country. I shall bring a stream a new way from the mountains. (*Turning to QUEEN OXARA on his extreme right*) And

for you, too, O Oxara, we shall make a pleasaunce. I shall have rocks brought from the quarries for you, and my idle slaves shall make a hill and plant it with mountain shrubs, and you can sit there in the winter thinking of the North. (*To the kneeling OVERSEER*) Ah, what is here ?

THE KING'S OVERSEER. The plans of your royal garden, Majesty. The slaves have dug it for five years and rolled the paths. (*THE KING takes plans*)

THE KING. Was there not a garden in Babylon ?

THE KING'S OVERSEER. They say there was a garden there of some sort, Majesty.

THE KING. I will have a greater garden. Let the world know and wonder. (*Looks at plans*)

THE KING'S OVERSEER. It shall know at once, Majesty.

THE KING (*pointing at plan*) I do not like that hill, it is too steep.

THE KING'S OVERSEER. No, Majesty.

THE KING. Remove it.

THE KING'S OVERSEER. Yes, Majesty.

THE KING. When will the garden be ready for the queens to walk in ?

THE KING'S OVERSEER. Work is slow, Majesty, at this season of the year because the green stuff is scarce and the slaves grow idle. They even become insolent and ask for bones.

QUEEN CAHAFRA (*to THE KING'S OVERSEER*) Then *why* are they not flogged ? (*To QUEEN THRAGOLIND*) It is so simple, they *only* have to flog them, but these people are so silly sometimes. I want to walk in the great garden, and then they tell me, "It is not ready,

Majesty. It is not ready, Majesty," as though there were any reason why it should *not* be ready.

FOURTH QUEEN. Yes, they are a great trouble to us.

(Meanwhile THE KING hands back the plans. Exit THE KING'S OVERSEER. Re-enter ATTENDANT with THE PROPHET. Having bowed before the idol he bows before THE KING and stands silent. The ATTENDANT having bowed to both stands by the doorway)

THE KING (*meanwhile to QUEEN ATHARLIA*) Perhaps we shall lure the ducks when the marshes are frozen to come and swim in your stream ; it will be like your own country. (*To THE PROPHET*) Prophesy unto us.

THE PROPHET (*speaks at once in a loud voice*) There was once a king that had slaves to hate him and to toil for him, and he had soldiers to guard him and to die for him. And the number of the slaves that he had to hate him and to toil for him was greater than the number of the soldiers that he had to guard him and to die for him. And the days of that king were few. And the number of thy slaves, O King, that thou hast to hate thee is greater than the number of thy soldiers.

QUEEN CAHAFRA (*to QUEEN THRAGOLIND*) And I wore the crown with the sapphires and the big emerald in it, and the foreign prince said that I looked very sweet.

(THE KING, who has been smiling at ATHARLIA, gives a gracious nod to THE PROPHET when he hears him stop speaking. When the QUEENS see THE KING

*nod graciously they applaud THE PROPHET by idly clapping their hands)*

THIRD QUEEN. Do ask him to make us another prophecy, Majesty ! He is so interesting. He looks so clever.

THE KING. Prophesy unto us.

THE PROPHET. Thine armies camped upon thy mountainous borders descry no enemy in the plains afar. And within thy gates lurks he for whom thy sentinels seek upon lonely guarded frontiers. There is a fear upon me and a boding. Even yet there is time, even yet ; but *little* time. And my mind is dark with trouble for thy kingdom.

QUEEN CAHAFRA (*to Queen Thragolind*) I do not like the way he does his hair.

QUEEN THRAGOLIND. It would be all right if he would only have it cut.

THE KING (*to The Prophet, dismissing him with a nod of the head*) Thank you, that has been very interesting.

QUEEN THRAGOLIND. How clever he is. I wonder how he thinks of things like that ?

QUEEN CAHAFRA. Yes ; but I hate a man who is conceited about it. Look how he wears his hair.

QUEEN THRAGOLIND. Yes, of course, it is perfectly dreadful.

QUEEN CAHAFRA. Why can't he wear his hair like other people, even if he does say clever things ?

QUEEN THRAGOLIND. Yes, I hate a conceited man.

[*N.B.—It is not necessary for the prophet's hair to be at all unusual*]

(Enter an ATTENDANT. He bows before the idol, then kneels to THE KING, *loq.*)

THE ATTENDANTS. The guests are all assembled in the Chamber of Banquets (*All rise. The QUEENS walk two abreast to the Chamber of Banquets*)

QUEEN ATHARLIA (to QUEEN OXARA) What was he talking about ?

QUEEN OXARA. He was talking about the armies on the frontier.

QUEEN ATHARLIA. Ah ! That reminds me of that young captain in the Purple Guard. They say that he loves Linoora.

QUEEN OXARA. Oh, Thearkos. Linoora probably said that.

(When the QUEENS come to the doorway they halt on each side of it. Then they turn facing one another. Then THE KING leaves his throne and passes between them into the Chamber of Banquets, each couple curtsying low to him as he passes. The QUEENS follow, then the ATTENDANTS. There rises the wine song, the chant of the nobles, drowning the chant of the low-born. Only THE IDOL-GUARD remains behind, still kneeling beside Illuriel)

THE IDOL-GUARD. I do not like those things the Prophet said. It would be terrible if they were true. It would be very terrible if they were false, for he prophesies in the name of Illuriel. Ah ! They are singing the wine song, the chant of the nobles. The queens are singing. How merry they are ! I should like to be a noble and sit and look at the queens. (He joins in the song)

THE VOICE OF A SENTINEL. Guard turn out. (*The wine song still continues*)

THE VOICE OF ONE HAVING AUTHORITY. Turn out the guard there ! Wake up you accursed pigs ! (*Still the wine song. A faint sound as of swords*)

A VOICE CRYING. To the armoury. To the armoury. Reinforce. The slaves have come to the armoury. Ah ! mercy ! (*For awhile there is silence. Enter KING ARGIMENES, in the doorway, log.*)

KING ARGIMENES. Go you to the slave-fields. Say that the palace-guard is dead and that we have taken the armoury. Ten of you hold the armoury till our men come from the slave-fields.

(*He comes into the hall with his slaves armed with swords*)

KING ARGIMENES. Throw down Illuriel.

THE IDOL-GUARD. You must take my life before you touch my god.

A SLAVE. We only want your pike. (*All attack him ; they seize his pike and bind his hands behind him. They all pull down Illuriel, the dark-green idol, who breaks into seven pieces*)

KING ARGIMENES. Illuriel is fallen and broken asunder.

ZARB (*with some awe*) Immortal Illuriel is dead at last.

KING ARGIMENES. My god was broken into three pieces, but Illuriel is broken into seven. The fortunes of Darniak will prevail over mine no longer. (*A slave breaks off a golden arm from the throne*) Come, we will arm all the slaves. (*Exeunt. Enter KING DARNIAK and RETINUE*)

KING DARNIAK. My throne is broken. Illuriel is turned against me.

AN ATTENDANT. Illuriel is fallen.

ALL (*with KING DARNIAK*) Illuriel is fallen, is fallen.  
*(Some drop their spears)*

KING DARNIAK (*to IDOL-GUARD*) What envious god or sacrilegious man has dared to do this thing ?

IDOL-GUARD. Illuriel is fallen.

KING DARNIAK. Have men been here ?

THE IDOL-GUARD. Is fallen.

KING DARNIAK. What way did they go ?

THE IDOL-GUARD. Illuriel is fallen.

KING DARNIAK. They shall be tortured here before Illuriel, and their eyes shall be hung on a thread about his neck, so that Illuriel shall see it, and on their bones we will set him up again. Come ! (*Those that have dropped their spears pick them up, but trail them along behind them on the ground. All follow dejectedly. Voices of lamentation growing fainter and fainter off : Illuriel is fallen, Illuriel is fallen. Illuriel, Illuriel, Illuriel. Is fallen. Is fallen. The song of the low-born ceases suddenly. Then voices of the slaves in the slave-fields chanting very loudly : Illuriel is fallen, is fallen, is fallen. Illuriel is fallen and broken asunder. Illuriel is fallen, fallen, fallen. Clamour of fighting is heard, the clash of swords, and voices, and now and then the name of Illuriel*)

THE IDOL-GUARD (*kneeling over a fragment of Illuriel*) Illuriel is broken. They have overthrown Illuriel. They have done great harm to the courses of the stars. The moon will be turned to blackness or fall and

forsake the nights. The sun will rise no more. They do not know how they have wrecked the world.

(*Re-enter KING ARGIMÉNÈS and his men*)

KING ARGIMÉNÈS. Go you to the land of Ithara and tell them that I am free. And do you go to the army on the frontier. Offer them death, or the right arm of the throne to be melted and divided amongst them all. Let them choose. (*The armed slaves go to the throne and stand on each side of it, log.*) Majesty, ascend your throne. (KING ARGIMÉNÈS, standing facing audience, lifts the sword slowly, lying on both his hands, a little above his head, then looking up at it, log.) Praise to the unknown warrior and to all gods that bless him. (*He ascends the throne. ZARB prostrates himself at the foot of it and remains prostrated for the rest of the act, muttering at intervals "Majesty."*) An armed slave enters dragging THE KING'S OVERSEER. KING ARGIMÉNÈS sternly watches him. He is dragged before the throne. He still has the roll of parchment in his hand. For some moments KING ARGIMÉNÈS does not speak. Then pointing at the parchment) What have you there ?

THE KING'S OVERSEER (*kneeling*) It is a plan of the great garden, Majesty. It was to have been a wonder to the world. (*Unfolds it*)

KING ARGIMÉNÈS (*grimly*) Show me the place that I digged for three years. (THE KING'S OVERSEER shows it with trembling hands ; the parchment shakes visibly) Let there be built there a temple to an Unknown Warrior. And let this sword be laid on its altar evermore, that the ghost of that Warrior wandering

by night, if men do walk by night from across the grave, may see his sword again. And let slaves be allowed to pray there and those that are oppressed ; nevertheless the noble and the mighty shall not fail to repair there too, that the Unknown Warrior shall not lack due reverence.

(Enter, running, a man of the household of KING DARNIAK. He starts and stares aghast on seeing KING ARGIMĒNÈS)

KING ARGIMĒNÈS. Who are you ?

MAN. I am the servant of the king's dog.

KING ARGIMĒNÈS. Why do you come here ?

MAN. The king's dog is dead.

KING ARGIMĒNÈS AND HIS MEN (*savagely and hungrily*) Bones !

KING ARGIMĒNÈS (*remembering suddenly what has happened and where he is*) Let him be buried with the late king.

ZARB (*in voice of protest*) Majesty.

[Curtain









